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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Eisenhower East planning process is a unique opportunity to create a shared community-wide vision for a vibrant, new, urban, mixed-use community centered on the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station. This new transit-focused neighborhood will include a variety of natural and urban open spaces and parks, a balance of jobs and housing, and a retail/entertainment center, serving both a local and regional market to capitalize on the existing theater complex.

In economic terms, Eisenhower East is a resource of great importance to the City of Alexandria as it provides the foundation for the City's near and long-term commercial and residential growth. The Plan represents the opportunity to create additional value outside the Alexandria historic core by defining a new sense of place where people will be attracted to visit, to shop, to work, and to live.

The Eisenhower East Plan will create a new “city within a city,” with distinctive architecture, a mix of businesses, residences and retail spaces, grand boulevards, and parks and gardens, creating a location and an address complementary to and compatible with Old Town and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.



Eisenhower East Small Area Illustrative Plan

The planning for Eisenhower East echoes the 18th-century challenge that faced Alexandria's forefathers in designing the blueprint for the City's origins at the edge of the Potomac River. The City founders wisely chose to carefully lay out a harmonious street grid system adjacent to the waterfront, providing room for the growth of commerce and domicile. Today, in the current planning effort, the City looks back to these sound urban design principles as the basis for the forward looking approach encompassed in this Plan.

Eisenhower East represents transportation opportunities and challenges. In terms of opportunities, the area is at the confluence of major regional thoroughfares and is serviced by two Metro lines and rail service. In terms of challenges, large undeveloped parcels of land must be configured to take advantage of the location of the Metro stations, incorporate pedestrian-friendly amenities, and minimize the impacts of traffic and parking. A major focus of this planning effort is to ensure that the combination of transit services, highway access, and local streets will be adequate to support the anticipated level of development, while mitigating the traffic on the streets and minimizing the impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

Eisenhower East includes about 230 acres bounded on the north by Duke Street and the Metro rail yard, on the east by Holland Lane and the African-American Heritage Park, on the south by the Capital Beltway (I-95/I-495), and on the west by Telegraph Road. The planning area includes the 76.5-acre planned Carlyle community (including the 17-acre, 2.5 million square foot U.S. Patent and Trademark Office complex), and the Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station.

The area suffers from limited points of vehicular ingress and egress; however, improvements to the Capital Beltway will connect the area to the east at Mill Road and the west at Stovall Street.

Historical Context

The Eisenhower East area is integral with the City's history. The area was the location of the 18th-century Village of Cameron, which included a grist mill, and later the West End Village was created as the City's first "suburb."

The Orange and Alexandria Railroad came to the area in the 1850s, setting the stage for the industrial activity that would occupy the area for the next 140 years. Much of the southeastern portion of Eisenhower East was marshland that has since been filled, first, with sediment and

later, with soil from the construction of the Capital Beltway. Portions of the area were in the Cameron Run flood plain, and as recently as the 1940s, small boats could navigate part of the marsh area.

In the 1980s, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) constructed the Eisenhower Avenue Metro station as part of the "Yellow Line" of the region's heavy rail transit system. Eisenhower East's proximity and exposure to the Beltway, the presence of large vacant sites, and the availability of buildings with ample parking and less expensive rents compared to downtown Alexandria locations all brought relatively low density, back office space, flex space, government office users, and warehousing to the area.

Eisenhower East is unusual in that the land is held by very few ownership entities. As parcels within Carlyle are sold, more ownership parcels are created, but the undeveloped land is generally held by fewer than 10 parties.

Infrastructure

Water, sanitary sewer, and storm water systems are generally in place to serve Eisenhower East; however, some are aging and need to be relocated to reflect the pattern of ownership and the proposed road system.

The City's Public Safety Center, constructed in the 1980s along Mill Road, houses the City of Alexandria Police Department and serves the entire City. The Department has raised concerns about the size and location of their facility.

The Alexandria Fire Department has also expressed the need for an additional fire station to handle the amount of calls they are receiving in a timely and responsive manner.

REAL ESTATE MARKET

The Plan assessed the Eisenhower East office and retail market over the next 20 years. Given the strong location in the residential market and the proximity to the Arlington corridor and Washington, D.C. via Metro, it was assumed that the residential market remains strong if interest rates remain within reasonable ranges over the Plan's horizon.

Office

Eisenhower East's office potential was analyzed relative to the regional trends in office construction. Alexandria is part of the Washington, DC regional market of which Northern Virginia comprises 44% of the region's 325 million square feet of office space.

Alexandria's inventory of 13.0 million square feet of office space has grown by an average of 418,000 square feet per year between 1970 and 2004 (including the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office [PTO] complex) and captures 5.2% of the regional market.

Alexandria currently enjoys an office occupancy rate of 91%; the City has not been severely impacted by the recent collapse of the "dot.com" industries.

Given its strategic position, Alexandria should be able to capture a four to five percent market share of the regional office demand, or 250,000 to 350,000 square feet per year, for the next 10 to 15 years (in addition to the space that is currently committed for development at PTO). Eisenhower East should be able to capture between 200,000 and 250,000 square feet annually.

Retail

Eisenhower East includes the potential for a "town center" retail experience offering a diverse mix of retail, restaurant and services to meet the needs of the larger regional population. The area can also support a convenience retail and service center that provides for the needs of residents and employees.

Analysis indicates that Eisenhower East, with the assistance of an experienced retail developer, could support a Town Center retail development of 400,000+ square feet and an additional 100,000 square feet of retail supporting the needs of residents.

LAND USE & CIRCULATION

Circulation

The vision for Eisenhower East is for a dynamic urban mixed-use community, a true “urban village” that encourages the use of transit as an alternative to the automobile and creates a quality Alexandria neighborhood incorporating living, working, shopping, entertainment, and recreation.

Eisenhower Avenue

The vision for Eisenhower Avenue is for a proud, landscaped urban boulevard with wide landscaped sidewalks and a 30-foot wide landscaped median. The intent is to create a beautiful urban boulevard where the pedestrian will feel equally at home with the vehicles. Eisenhower Avenue will include three traffic lanes in each direction with the curb lanes accommodating parallel parking.

New ramps from the Capital Beltway will provide ingress and egress to Mill Road from the express lanes that serve Maryland and Washington, D.C. origins, and a future ramp is also projected at Stovall Street from the Capital Beltway to serve the Eisenhower Valley area. To maximize the use of the Metro, the existing station platform will be extended northward over Eisenhower Avenue to allow direct pedestrian access from the north side of the street.

The Urban Street Grid

The Plan extends an urban street grid throughout Eisenhower East and creates development blocks approximating the size of those found in the original plan for Carlyle and Old Town. Creating an interconnected urban grid of streets is essential to providing vehicular movement alternatives and mitigating traffic. The streets will include generous sidewalks paved with brick, street trees, pedestrian scaled street furniture and classic street lighting to enhance the pedestrian experience.

Land Use/Circulation Strategy

To accomplish the vision for Eisenhower East, the Plan creates a true mixed-use neighborhood with a balance between jobs and housing at a density that will support and be served by the transit system. A major goal of the planning effort was to identify a comprehensive strategy to reduce traffic impacts that would result from development under the existing zoning in place in Eisenhower East. The objective was a reduction in potential traffic impacts both within the immediate Eisenhower East area and to adjoining neighborhood areas.

An integrated approach was developed that provides a reduction in overall development square footage, balances uses to lower traffic generation, includes a workable internal road network, places limits on parking to reduce the number of vehicles entering the area, and encourages enhanced transit usage.

The approach includes seven traffic strategies that will mitigate the impacts of traffic and enhance the quality of life:

- *Create an urban grid of interconnected streets*
The street grid reduces traffic congestion by providing alternative routes and turning options, while creating a sense of “openness” throughout the neighborhood.
- *Concentrate the greatest development at the Metro*
The Plan locates 73% of the new office area, 66% of the new residential and 82% of the new retail/entertainment uses within 1500 feet of the Metro.
- *Achieve a balance between jobs and housing*
The Plan calls for a balance of office, residential, hotel, and retail/entertainment uses, and a 50/50 distribution of the residential and office square footage, or two jobs for every resident. Balancing the residential and office use has a more positive effect upon traffic impacts than reducing the intensity of overall development.

- *Provide a modest reduction in development intensity*
A modest reduction in overall development intensity (from the existing maximum zoning) is incorporated into the Plan. To achieve the reduction, the Plan's allowable square footage is based on the gross floor area footage rather than the net square footage. This change provides a better reflection of the actual size of buildings, and results in better buildings as the incentive to construct occupied floor area with ceilings heights less than 7'-6" is eliminated.
- *Extend the neighborhood activity over a 16 hour per day / 7 day per week period*
The Plan incorporates a regional serving retail/entertainment complex and a neighborhood serving area to provide for the needs of the workforce and residents of Eisenhower East. Office workers and residents will remain within the neighborhood during the workday, thus reducing the overall number of vehicular trips.
- *Minimize the overall amount of parking/ optimize the short-term parking*
The Eisenhower East Plan parking strategy establishes a limitation on the amount of parking to encourage the use of transit and limit the number of single occupancy vehicles on the street.

- *Maximize the use of the transit facilities with a Transportation Management Plan*
The Plan includes the formation of a district-wide transportation management program to ensure a coordinated plan of policies and incentives to maximize the utilization of the existing and proposed transit infrastructure.

The synergy gained through the integration of the seven strategies into the Plan results in substantial improvements in the traffic performance. Compared to an early analysis of the traffic under the current zoning, the Plan's estimated traffic has 25% fewer trips in the PM peak hour and 29% fewer trips in the AM peak hour. The overall reduction in average daily traffic (ADT) is 17%. Perhaps of more importance is that the projected performance of the major intersections within the Eisenhower East area is significantly improved.

Outside of the study area, the comprehensive approach also results in improvement to the level of performance for a number of intersections along Duke Street, particularly during the AM peak hours. Within the adjoining neighborhood area, reductions in projected daily traffic will be 17-18% overall with implementation of the Eisenhower East Plan.

Land Use Concept

The Plan identifies the recommended principal land uses and the maximum allowable gross development utilizing a block-by-block approach. The primary use, the allowable gross square footage (AGSF), the maximum building height, retail locations and size, and the other general development controls are outlined in the Plan for each of the undeveloped or partially developed blocks.

The Plan optimizes the location of land uses based upon an analysis of the proximity to Metro, relationship to major roadways, adjacency to parks and open space, and distance from noise and other environmental hazards.

The amount of development was determined through an analysis of the square footage allowed (including converting net areas to gross areas) under current zoning, a factor for above grade parking, the ability of the site to accommodate the development, the distance to transit and the appropriateness for large or tall buildings. The allowable gross floor area for each block includes a factor to accommodate the above grade parking that cannot be incorporated in two levels of underground parking.



View West Along Eisenhower Avenue

The primary uses within the Plan are office and residential; however, the Plan also envisions retail/entertainment as important uses to create a vibrant mixed-use community. The Plan envisions a modern, cohesive urban retail environment, rather than just accommodating retail in the ground floor of buildings along street frontages.

A major regional retail/restaurant/entertainment center of some 300,000 to 400,000 SF is planned as an integral part of the Hoffman Town Center, and a neighborhood retail center is planned for the foot of John Carlyle Street to serve the retail and service needs of the immediate residential neighborhood. An Illustrative Plan has been prepared to provide a graphic illustration of one scenario of the implementation of Eisenhower East as developed under the Plan.

Open Space

The Plan includes a comprehensive system of integrated and interconnected conservation areas, passive and active parks, and neighborhood and urban squares to meet the needs of residents and visitors. The Plan includes four types of open space and parks:

- *Parks and Resource Protection Areas*
Parks and Resource Protection Areas (RPAs) are related in form and location to natural amenities such as stream valleys, watersheds and resource protection areas. The Plan creates a major Community Park along the Mill Run RPA. The north side of the RPA is expanded and enhanced to create a new active/passive park—The Meadow. This park also assists in meeting the City’s requirement to create a security radius northward from the police facility and jail.
- *Neighborhood Squares*
Neighborhood squares of green grass surrounded by shade trees are located within the residential neighborhoods to provide for informal and formal activities and a green oasis within the urban fabric.

- *Urban Squares*
Urban squares are centrally located throughout the higher-density areas, and are generally paved with enhanced materials and defined by shade trees at the edges. Facilities are provided for sitting, small concerts, outdoor markets, and restaurant and café dining.
- *Boulevard Park Space*
Eisenhower Avenue is designed as a boulevard/linear park with a landscaped median, wide brick sidewalks, street trees, seating areas, ample crosswalks and distinctive lighting. The Eisenhower Linear Park extends the length of the planning area and unifies the Avenue.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing within Eisenhower East meets the policy of the City to provide housing to meet the income levels of a broad segment of the community. The Plan calls for all developers of new residential or commercial development to provide a contribution to the City’s Housing Trust Fund (currently in the amount of \$1.00 per gross square foot), or to provide on-site affordable units.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation is a determining factor to the amount and type of development and future character of the area. To ensure that Eisenhower East develops into a lively, mixed-use environment, the Plan provides adequate transportation capacity, while minimizing the impacts of traffic.

In 2001, a City study indicated that under the then current zoning the major intersections along Eisenhower Avenue failed or required a number of multiple turning lanes that the community found unacceptable. The failure of the current transportation infrastructure to support the zoning driven land uses was a major impetus for the City to undertake the Eisenhower East planning process.

The Plan recommends a balance between housing and office uses to reduce the number of auto trips, a reduction in the intensity of development, a grid of urban streets, a limited supply of parking, improved local transit alternatives, an improved pedestrian circulation system, an expansion of the Metro platform to the north side of Eisenhower Avenue, and a district wide Transportation Management Program (TMP).

Transit and Supportive Design Principles

A high level of transit use is needed to minimize traffic impacts and support the anticipated levels of development. Transit trips almost always involve a pedestrian trip at one or both ends of the transit portion of the trip; thus, an attractive pedestrian experience is critical to increasing the use of transit. The Plan establishes pedestrian supportive design principles that will make every trip attractive, direct, and safe.

Streets and Regional Access

The Plan integrates a combination of highway access, local grid streets, and transit services to support the existing and proposed development. Significant through traffic pressures are created as the State connects the Capital Beltway express ramps directly to Mill Road.

The Plan recommends the construction of a new Southern Street (with associated connection streets) extending from Mill Road westward on the south side of the study area to provide alternative access to the Hoffman lands. Another roadway providing further distribution options connects Mill Road, south of Eisenhower, to Elizabeth Lane. These new roads will alleviate significant congestion on Eisenhower Avenue, provide additional Metro access, and reduce turning volumes on Eisenhower Avenue. At the Eisenhower Avenue/Mill Road intersection the left turn lanes could be reduced from two to one and the right-turn lanes eliminated.

Parking

The Plan imposes a maximum parking ratio by land use type. Also, the Plan calls for short-term parking for office visitors, and retail and restaurant uses to be managed in order to maintain an adequate supply. The Plan provides a significant number of on-street parking spaces that are also maximized for short-term use.

Achieving the reduced parking ratios requires programs to maximize the use of transit and minimize the use of the single occupant vehicles (SOV). Within 1500 feet of the Metro station approximately 43 percent of the workers will have to commute in non-single occupancy vehicles; e.g., will arrive on transit, foot, bicycle, car or vanpool. These non-SOV rates are achievable with a strong Transit Management Plan as demonstrated in Arlington County, which is achieving rates as high as 55%.

Transit

The Eisenhower East area is well served by high-capacity transit. The Plan builds upon the availability of transit, encouraging a very high level of use through incentives such as employee transit subsidies, shuttle transit systems, improved information, etc., and through automobile use disincentives, included in the parking policies.

URBAN DESIGN

The Plan's Urban Design component outlines policies and principles to ensure the implementation of the Plan's vision for Eisenhower East. Integral to the Plan are principles for the design of the urban street network, the system of parks, open spaces, plazas and squares, the height and massing of buildings, and architectural design principles.

The principles are intended to ensure high quality and establish character without prescribing an exact architectural expression or form, where thoughtful solutions to design problems are encouraged in the spirit of creating the best possible public environment for Eisenhower East.

Following the adoption of the Plan, more detailed architectural design guidelines will be prepared by the Department of Planning and Zoning and adopted by the Planning Commission.

IMPLEMENTATION

Adoption of the Plan is an important first step in outlining the future of Eisenhower East; however, given both the scale of the undertaking and the dynamics of the marketplace, successful implementation of the Eisenhower East Plan will require continuous involvement of the City of Alexandria to maintain the integrity of the longer term vision.

With the given number of stakeholders, the range and magnitude of the issues, a changing community, and the likely length of the build-out of Eisenhower East, it is recommended that the City maintain a proactive role in directing and implementing the Eisenhower East Plan. This involvement can be structured in a number of different ways, including:

- Utilizing an existing City Department, with designated staff focused on the Plan implementation;
- Supporting the City's role with assistance from existing organizations such as the Eisenhower Partnership, building their capacity to take on a more active leadership role; and/or

- Establishing a public/private partnership, including City officials, community representatives, and property owners, to provide on-going leadership and management.

The process for Plan implementation must be fair, reasonable, and understandable. The City, the developers, and the community need to understand the rules and the acceptable development parameters. To the degree that the Plan and approval process are predictable, there is greater certainty about land values, development absorption, physical form, financial returns, and the benefits to the greater community.

To equitably finance the community infrastructure elements, the City, working with the property owners and development community should explore funding mechanisms that will ensure a fair allocation of costs relative to the resulting benefits.

Implementation of the Plan begins with the adoption of this Eisenhower Avenue Small Area Plan to modify the existing King Street/Eisenhower Avenue Metro Station Small Area Plan. The Plan recommends the creation of a new CDD 11 zone encompassing the land south of Eisenhower Avenue and east of Mill Road, and the modification of the existing CDD 2 zone.

To ensure the vision of a quality urban neighborhood, a Design Review Board will be established to implement architectural design guidelines that will be developed by the Department of Planning and Zoning and adopted by the Planning Commission.